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Issue 19

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A six-year-old ran up and down the supermarket aisles shouting frantically, "Marian, Marian!"

Finally reunited with his mother, he was chided by her: "You shouldn't call me 'Marian'. I'm your mother. You should call me that."

"I know," said the child, "but the store is full of Mommies."

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My husband, an attorney, is frequently consulted by clients who, after learning what the cost of legal services will be, decide to do without his aid. Recently the elderly minister of a small, struggling church came in with a legal problem.

After patiently listening to an explanation of my husband's fees, he left the office with a prudent: "Thank you, sir, but I believe I'll just pray this one through."

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A guy goes into a bar, orders twelve beers, and starts drinking them as fast as he can.

The bartender asks, "Why are you drinking so fast?"

The guy replies, "You would be drinking fast if you had what I had."

The bartender asks, "What do you have?"

The guy replies, "No money."

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Jim was just out of Navy boot camp, and was on his first ship. About two hours out of port, he began to get a bit ill from the motion of the ship. He approached an ensign, also just out of training and on his first cruise. He saluted and said, "Excuse me sir, I am feeling seasick, and I wondered if I may have permission to go downstairs to the dispensary."

The ensign returned his salute and replied, "Sailor, you are in the Navy now. You don't go downstairs, you go below! There is no dispensary on this ship, there is sickbay. Not only that, that is not the floor, it is a deck, that is not the ceiling, it is the overhead, that is not a pillar, it is a stanchion, that is not a water fountain, it is a scuttlebutt. If I ever hear you using civilian words instead of Naval jargon, I will throw you out of that little round window over there!"

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One of my students could not take my college seminar final exam because of a funeral. No problem, I told him. Make it up the following week. That week came, and again he couldn't take the test due to another funeral. "You'll have to take the test early next week," I insisted. "I can't keep postponing it."

"I'll take the test next week if no one dies," he told me. By now I was suspicious.

"How can you have so many people you know pass away in three weeks?"

"I don't know any of these people," he said. "I'm the only gravedigger in town."

HOCKEY FUN FACTS

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The pastor's sermon focused on how God knows which of us grows best in the sunlight and which of us needs shade. "For example," he said, "roses must be planted in the sun, but fuchsias thrive in the shade."

After the service, a woman, her face beaming, approached him. "Your sermon did me so much good," she said.

Before he had time to gloat too much, she added, "I always wondered what was wrong with my fuchsias."

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Last summer my wife and I met a couple at a restaurant. After lunch, the women decided to go shopping, and I invited the man to go sailing.

While we were out on the water, a storm blew in. The tide had gone out, and we were down-wind trying to work our way back through a narrow channel. At one point the boat grounded and we had to climb overboard and shove with all our might to get it back in deeper water.

As my new friend stood there, ankle deep in muck, the wind blowing his hair wildly, rain streaming down his face, he grinned at me, and with unmistakable sincerity said, "Sure beats shopping."



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Canada's Parks

- Canada's largest park is Wood Buffalo Park in Alberta. It's bigger than the country Switzerland.
- Canada's 42 national parks cover about 2 percent of the country's entire land mass.

I was on board the USS Kitty Hawk when we docked in the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo. One morning, as the local fishing fleet passed by on its way out to sea, a boat came too close to our ship. A Marine held up a sign warning the captain to stay away, and he complied. But the next day, the boat was back. This time, the fisherman held something. The nervous Marine pointed to his rifle. The fisherman lifted the object and unfurled it, revealing a sign of his own. In perfect English it read "Your Sign Is Upside Down."

What would you do if Money was no object?

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My husband decided life would be easier if he wired a new light switch in the master bedroom to save us from fumbling in the dark for the lamp. He cut through the drywall and found a stash of bottles and small boxes inside the wall.

"Honey!" he called excitedly. "You've got to come here and see what I found."

I ran in and quickly realized that his next task would be to fix the hole that now led into the back of our medicine cabinet.

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Grandpa was always going on about the good old days and the lower cost of living in particular. "When I was a kid, my mom could send me to the store, and I'd get a salami, two pints of milk, six oranges, two loaves o' bread, a magazine, and some new blue jeans ... all for a dollar!"

Then Grandpa said sadly, "You can't do that anymore. They got those video cameras everywhere you look."

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Take The Challenge Now

While I was employed by a private corporation and assigned to the space-shuttle program, my job included ordering supplies. One of the engineers asked me to get a new dictionary for him. The request form said, "State reason this item is needed," so I asked him why he wanted one.

I expected his answer would be "My old copy is lost" or "The cover is falling off." Instead he replied, "My edition defines spaceship as an 'imaginary aircraft.'" He got his new dictionary.

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At a dinner party to introduce the new Administrator of the Maryland State Highway, the new boss went on and on extolling his own virtues: the forward-thinking, the modernization he'd put in place, the down-sizing, equipment upgrades, roadway improvements he had both instituted and planned for the future while he was with the Pennsylvania Dept of Transportation.

Finally, after what seemed like hours, he opened the floor for questions.

"Sir," said a voice from the back of the room, "perhaps you'd also tell us why Pennsylvania didn't want you anymore."

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A couple of dog owners are arguing about whose pet is smarter.

"My dog is so smart," says the first owner, "that every morning he waits for the paperboy to come around. He tips the kid and then brings the newspaper to me, along with my morning coffee."

"I know," says the second owner.

"How do you know?"

"My dog told me."

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Long lines were supposed to be a thing of the past once our neighborhood supermarket installed a self-serve checkout counter. Customers easily figured it out -- except for the woman at the front of my line. In its irritating computer-generated voice, the machine kept reminding her to take one item after another out of the scanning zone before she could check the next. There was a constant "Move ... your ... produce" and "Move ... your ... milk" and so on. Everyone in the growing line was getting restless, but even we had to laugh when she left a bag of dinner rolls on the scanner and the machine commanded, "Move ... your ... buns."

Cloth for kids

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In 1986, Peter Davies was on holiday in Kenya after graduating from Northwestern University.

On a hike through the bush, he came across a young bull elephant standing with one leg raised in the air. The elephant seemed distressed, so Peter approached it very carefully. He got down on one knee, inspected the elephant's foot, and found a large piece of wood deeply embedded in it. As carefully and as gently as he could, Peter worked the wood out with his knife, after which the elephant gingerly put down its foot.

The elephant turned to face the man, and with a rather curious look on its face, stared at him for several tense moments. Peter stood frozen, thinking of nothing else but being trampled. Eventually the elephant trumpeted loudly, turned, and walked away.

Peter never forgot that elephant or the events of that day. Twenty years later, Peter was walking through the Chicago Zoo with his teenaged son. As they approached the elephant enclosure, one of the creatures turned and walked over to near where Peter and his son Cameron were standing. The large bull elephant stared at Peter, lifted its front foot off the ground, then put it down. The elephant did that several times then trumpeted loudly, all the while staring at the man.

Remembering the encounter in 1986, Peter could not help wondering if this was the same elephant. Peter summoned up his courage, climbed over the railing, and made his way into the enclosure. He walked right up to the elephant and stared back in wonder. The elephant trumpeted again, wrapped its trunk around one of Peter's legs and slammed him against the railing, killing him instantly.

Probably wasn't the same elephant..

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